

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRETOR 06104 111233Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 HA-05 CU-04 /103 W
-----073909 111306Z /50

P R 111150Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9521
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 6104

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, SF
SUBJECT: SAG MAKES SECURITY SWEEP OF ATTERIDGEVILLE

1. ON NOV. 10, THE SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY POLICE MADE A SIX-HOUR SEARCH AND SWEEP OF THE PRETORIA BLACK TOWNSHIP, ATTERIDGEVILLE. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, AS MANY AS 600 PEOPLE WERE DETAINED. POLICE COMMISSIONER ABBOTT TOLD THE PRESS THAT IT WAS A "ROUTINE CLEANING UP" OPERATION DESIGNED TO COMBAT CRIMINAL ELEMENTS AND HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH POLITICAL UNREST. A CORDON OF SECURITY POLICE SEALED OFF THE TOWNSHIP WITH ROADBLOCKS ON ALL FRINGE STREETS AND THEN METHODICALLY SEARCHED HOMES, CARS AND TRAINS. ABBOTT SAID THAT THOSE ARRESTED WERE TAKEN FOR PASS LAW VIOLATIONS, OTHER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PRETOR 06104 111233Z

CRIMINAL CHARGES OR TO SEE IF THEY "WERE IN NEED OF CARE" UNDER THE CHILDREN'S WELFARE ACT.

2. EMBASSY BECAME AWARE OF OPERATION WHEN SEVERAL STUDENT LEADERS CONTACTED US AFTERNOON OF NOV. 10. THEY STATED THAT POLICE WERE TARGETING CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS AND WERE TRYING TO ROUND UP STUDENT

LEADERSHIP. A QUICK TOUR AROUND THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TOWNSHIP BY EMBASSY OFFICERS REVEALED THAT THE POLICE WERE OUT IN FORCE. SEVERAL TRUCK LOADS OF BLACKS WERE SEEN BEING TAKEN FROM THE TOWNSHIP IN POLICE VEHICLES. THE ESTIMATE OF 600 DETAINED DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE AN EXAGGERATION. SOME BLACKS WHO LIVE IN ATTERIDGEVILLE CLAIM THE FIGURE IS MUCH HIGHER. OTHER SOURCES TOLD US THAT POLICE OBVIOUSLY HAD A "HIT LIST" OF INDIVIDUALS.

3. COMMENT: POLICE SWEEP WAS DIRECTED PRIMARILY AT STUDENT AND COMMUNITY LEADERS ALTHOUGH SOME CRIMINAL ELEMENTS ALSO WERE CAUGHT UP IN THE SWEEP. ATTERIDGEVILLE HAS REMAINED THE MOST TROUBLESOME TOWNSHIP FOR THE SAG SINCE THE OCT. 19 CRACKDOWN. BOYCOTTS OF SCHOOLS AND EXAMS HAVE BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE THERE AND PERIODIC INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE HAVE CONTINUED OVER LAST FEW WEEKS. THE SAG IS APPARENTLY ATTEMPTING TO CRACK THE UNDERGROUND STUDENT ORGANIZATION AND PUT THE COMMUNITY ON NOTICE THAT IT WILL DEAL WITH CONTINUED UNREST WITH A STRONG HAND.

BOWDLER

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